

Funding call: Addressing health inequalities: improving access to Structured Medication Reviews in seldom heard communities.

The [Health Innovation Network Polypharmacy Programme](#) is offering up to 10 CORE20 PCNs the chance to submit bids for up to £1,500 of funding to improve the uptake of Structured Medication Reviews (SMRs) in more deprived communities.

Background

In England, the NHS primary care system dispenses over 1 billion prescription items every year. As more people live longer with multiple long-term health conditions, the number of medicines they take often increases. This can create a significant burden for the person trying to manage multiple medicine regimes, and in some cases, it can cause harm. Evidence also shows links between an increased risk of polypharmacy and deprivation^{1,2}; and that polypharmacy is affecting a higher proportion than average of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic populations¹.

SMRs are the best tested intervention for reducing problematic polypharmacy^{1,3,4,5}, with estimates for the percentage reduction in the number of problematic or unnecessary medicines a patient is taking ranging between 2.7%³ and 9.9%⁴. However, studies^{1,6} show that most patients do not understand what a SMR is and receive limited, if any information to help them understand or prepare for a SMR.

In 2022 The Health Innovation Network Polypharmacy Programme in partnership with patients and Leeds and Bradford Universities co-designed, tested and evaluated a suite of resources⁷ to help prepare patients for their SMR. The resources were later translated in to 10 community languages (see page 3) and launched for national roll-out September 2023. Local pilot examples^{8,9,10} have shown that the resources support increased engagement with patients who do speak or read English as their first language and result in an increased attendance rates when these patients are invited to attend an SMR.

Application Process: SMRs: Improving access and engagement with structured medication reviews in seldom heard communities.

We are asking PCNs to complete the application submission template and outline how your SMR quality improvement project will:

- Use data to identify patients aged 75 year and over taking 10 or more medicines for a structured medication review.
- Use the Health Innovation Network patient-facing SMR resources to engage, prepare and support patients for their structured medication review.
- Ensure the allocation of sufficient time for a comprehensive, shared-decision making, structured medication review for each patient.
- Provide protected time to summarise the impact of your project and participate in our evaluation process.
- Invite a minimum of 20 patients for an SMR and measure the impact. (attendance, self - assessment of the consultation and the number (if any) of medicines stopped

Project Expectations

- Successful PCNs must be from a CORE20 PCN, or demonstrate that the test site is a CORE20 GP Practice.
- Successful PCNs will receive up to £1,500 to spend as they see fit to facilitate the QI project, write up the results and participate in our evaluation process. The Health Innovation Network will not specify how each PCN should allocate the funding, recognising that each PCN is resourced differently and has varying capacity across roles that will contribute to the project i.e. administrative staff, pharmacists, GPs.
- Each PCN will produce a written case study to showcase what they did, their findings and any changes in medicines made. The case study should include data, details of any medicines stopped or changed and clinician and patient feedback on the usefulness of the HIN Patient-facing SMR resources in driving engagement, reducing non-attendance and improving patient understanding of SMRs.
- A representative from each successful project is required to participate in a short online or phone conversation with a member of our evaluation team to understand the project and how your patients responded to it in late January/February 2025.

Timelines

- Deadline for project proposals Friday 12th July 2024
- Successful submissions announced 24th July 2024
- MOUs signed and in place by 1st September 2024
- Case studies submitted by 20th January 2025.
- Participation in short telephone conversations January/February 2025

Exclusions

Applications unfortunately cannot be accepted from Health Innovation Networks that are not part of the HIN Polypharmacy Programme. The HINS excluded are HIN Eastern, HIN Manchester, UCLPartners, HIN North East North Cumbria and HIN South West.

Contact: For more information or if you have questions, please contact Amy Semple, National Polypharmacy Programme Manager a.semple@nhs.net

References

1. [Are there socioeconomic inequalities in polypharmacy among older people? A systematic review and meta-analysis \(ncl.ac.uk\)](#)
Anum Iqbal, Dr Charlotte Richardson, Hannah O'Keefe, Professor Barbara Hanratty, Professor Fiona Matthews, Professor Adam Todd. 2023. British Geriatric Society Journal.
2. Department of Health & Social Care (2021) [Good for you, good for us, good for everybody: a plan to reduce overprescribing to make patient care better and safer, support the NHS, and reduce carbon emissions \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
3. Baqir, Wasim & Hughes, Julian & Jones, Tania & Barrett, Steven & Desai, Nisha & Copeland, Richard & Campbell, David & Laverty, Annie. (2017). Impact of medication review, within a shared decision-making framework, on deprescribing in people living in care homes. *European Journal of Hospital Pharmacy*. 24. 10.1136/ejhpharm-2016-000900.
4. (Appendix D: Health Economics Analysis of Polypharmacy Reviews). NHS Scotland Health Economic Analysis of Polypharmacy Reviews available at [Polypharmacy guidance | Right Decisions \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#)
5. 'Mahony, C., Dalton, K., O'Hagan, L. *et al.* Economic cost-benefit analysis of person-centred medicines reviews by general practice pharmacists. *Int J Clin Pharm* (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11096-024-01732-y>
6. Daniel A Okeowo, Syed Tabish R Zaidi, Beth Fylan, David P Aildred, Barriers and facilitators of implementing proactive deprescribing within primary care: a systematic review, *International Journal of Pharmacy Practice*, Volume 31, Issue 2, April 2023, Pages 126–152, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijpp/riad001>
7. [Resources to support patients having a Structured Medication Review - The Health Innovation Network](#)
8. [A campaign to help patients discuss their medicines nearly doubled our medication reviews - The Pharmaceutical Journal \(pharmaceutical-journal.com\)](#)
9. [Me and my medicines on Vimeo](#) (Nottingham PCN pilot)
10. [Evaluating-patient-behaviour-change-materials-in-structured-medication-reviews.png \(1280x720\) \(healthinnovationmanchester.com\)](#)

Background information: Health Innovation Network SMR Patient Resources

To read more about how we developed the resources and the partners we worked with click here: [New resources for patients preparing for SMR - The Health Innovation Network](#)

We are currently expanding the range of resources available and will relaunch the resources formally on 16th July 2024. Please join us at our national webinar '[Supporting patients to get the most out of their Structured Medication Review](#)' to hear from national speakers and PCNs who have successfully piloted and now adopted the resources in routine practice:

Available resources:

- Patient animation film.
- Patient animation for GP practices (subtitled and no audio for screening in waiting rooms).
- Patient Structured Medication Review Invitation letter with prompt questions.
- Stopping Medicines Safely patient leaflet.
- Me and My Medicines Patient Charter: encouraging better conversations about medicines.
- Are Your Medicines Working Patient Leaflet and Symptom Tracker.

Available languages:

- English
- Arabic
- Bengali
- Chinese Traditional
- Chinese Simplified
- Gujarati
- Polish
- Punjabi Gurmukhi
- Punjabi Shanmukhi
- Romanian
- Urdu
- Somali

Available formats:

- PDF (printable hard copy, electronic and web accessible)
- Editable PDF for personalised patient information and local branding
- 'Read Aloud' audio versions accessed via a QR code on the resource
- East Read for people with learning or reading difficulties.

Our partners:

